

NOTES FOR QUERIES

Folklore Forum's note on the "Tale of the Elevator Man" (FF, IV, nos. 3-4 [1971], 85) has inspired more discussion. We reprint here two enlightened responses to Kilroy's correction of the Folklore Forum version of the story.

Dear Editors:

....Also I would like to point out that if "Kilroy" (in your latest Notes for Queries) was at the AFS meeting in Boston in 1965, he was mighty lonely, because the rest of the power elite was in Denver. An amazing coincidence is that when the AFS met in Boston in 1966, Roger Abrahams had an experience with an elevator operator -- or rather, he said he did -- which was identical to that of your contributor in 1965.

Yours truthfully,

Neil V. Rosenberg

Dear Sir:

Here's another bit regarding the "Tale of the Elevator Man."

After the 1962 AFS meeting, in Washington, D.C., I was returning to Bloomington by railroad train, along with a number of other members of the Society who lived at various points along the route. I had a long chat with one of our former presidents, who related a conversation he had with the hotel chambermaid when he was leaving. He had inquired what she thought of the folklore meetings, and she replied, "Man, you people do more talking and less screwing than any convention I've seen."

This takes it back several years before "Kilroy's" experience in Boston. (He should, incidentally, get his facts straight -- the Boston meeting was in 1966, not 1965!)

Sincerely,

Frank A. Hoffmann

The folklore world should also be informed that the legend that "JFK is Alive" (FF, II, 2 [1969], 54-55) has taken a sad turn. A dubious tabloid, Midnight (XVIII, 7, August 30, 1971), headlined that "JFK Did Not Die in Dallas." The story continued to report that JFK "was buried at sea April 16, 1971 -- seven years, four months and 22 days after Dallas!" (p. 10). Question: Is this really the end of the JFK legend?

We also would like to pass on the following communique, which was penned to us by one of our more excitable readers:

Sirs and Mesdames:

I am sick (no, not the right word)...I am bored to death with folklorists' current seeming obsession with the obscene. It is as though they were all delighted with discovering the 'scholarshit of fucklore.' To such carping on my part some would inanely reply, "But look at Rabelais and Chaucer..." Take a good look at them, however. Their words are ribald and bawdy (barnyard bawdy) and in place. They are never obscene or out of place. There is good, earthy laughter with them. They are mature: they are not petty, little sophomores discovering....what? What?

There were giants in the field: Archer Taylor, George Lyman Kittredge.... Today the budding geniuses are so captivated with the scholarly thought that a four-year-old knows a four-letter word that they believe their Ph.D.'s should be granted even before they themselves are able to spell h-r-e shit. (That's 'horse', in case you never saw one.) As a scholar, you know the last word, of course, so there's no sense in bowdlerizing it. Let us, by all means, be mature.

I would go on...but think it over yourself. Let's get back to work.

Name withheld by Request

[P.S.] What I say above applies to virtually every 'folklore' journal, making them impossible to pass around the house: take a look at the recent Journal of the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, p. 13: I'm cleaning my cunt! -- What do you want, good grammar or good taste. -- That's the sort of....ah, well.... carry on. But I don't subscribe to it, and I live here. Yes, Virginia, there is such a think as folklore.....

Take it easy. I'll try to. Best.